

Message Text

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AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 162702

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: UNGA, SY, IS, XF

SUBJECT: SYRIAN INTENTIONS ON ISRAELI SUSPENSION AT JIDDA
MEETING

FOLLOWING REPEAT DAMASCUS 2625 ACTION SECSTATE GENEVA
INFO BEIRUT TEL AVIV USUN NY DTD 10 JUL

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C O N F I D E N T I A L DAMASCUS 2625

EXDIS

GENEVA FOR SECRETARY'S PARTY AND MOYNIHAN

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: UNGA, SY, IS, XF

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SUBJECT: SYRIA WILL INTRODUCE RESOLUTION AT ISLAMIC CONFERENCE
TO SUSPEND ISRAEL FROM UNGA

REF: STATE 161090

1. SUMMARY: KHADDAM INTENDS INTRODUCE RESOLUTION AT ISLAMIC FONMINS CONFERENCE CALLING FOR SUSPENSION OF ISRAEL FROM UNGA UNTIL IT AGREES TO IMPLEMENT UN RESOLUTIONS AND RESPECT UN CHARTER. HE REJECTS ARGUMENT THAT THIS INITIATIVE RISKS UNDERMINING PRESENT NEGOTIATIONS. HE CONFIDENT THAT SYRIA CAN RETAIN CONTROL OF THIS INITIATIVE AND WILL REVIEW ITS APPLICABILITY IN LIGHT OF DEVELOPMENTS OVER COMING WEEKS AND MONTHS. WHILE COMPLIMENTING SINCERITY OF US PEACE EFFORTS HE REMAINS DEEPLY SUSPICIOUS OF ISRAELI INTENTIONS RE GOLAN AND CONCERNED ABOUT DISADVANTAGES FOR SYRIA IF US CONTINUES SEEK MOVE AHEAD ON ONLY ONE FRONT. END SUMMARY.

2. HAVE JUST COME FROM ONE HOUR TWENTY MINUTE SESSION WITH FONMIN KHADDAM TO DISCUSS SYRIAN INTENTIONS RE POSSIBLE CAMPAIGN TO OUST ISRAEL FROM UNGA TA ISLAMIC FONMINS MEETING IN JIDDA. KHADDAM WAS EXPECTING THIS DEMARCHE, REVEALING AT END OF OUR CONVERSATION THAT HE KNEW WE HAD ALREADY MADE SIMILAR PRESENTATIONS IN ALGIERS, CAIRO AND JIDDA. JUST AFTER I STATED WE HOPED REPORT WE HAVE HEARD THAT THERE IS A DECISION TO LAUNCH SUCH A CAMPAIGN IN JIDDA WAS INACCURATE, HE CUT IN "WHAT DO YOU EXPECT FROM US AFTER THE SERIES OF ISRAELI DECLARATIONS THAT THEY WILL NOT WITHDRAW FROM THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES AND IN PARTICULAR THAT THEY WILL NEVER WITHDRAW FROM GOLAN? FURTHERMORE, RABIN HAS MADE PERFECTLY CLEAR THAT GOI HAD NO INTENTION RECOGNIZING PALESTINIAN RIGHTS."

3. I DREW ON EVERY ARGUMENT PROVIDED IN INSTRUCTIONS, AND ADDED SOME, IN COURSE OF ENSUING DISCUSSION. KHADDAM MAINTAINED REPEATEDLY THAT SYRIA THOUGHT IT COULD ONLY BE USEFUL, EVEN HELPFUL, TO US DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS FOR SYRIA TO EXERT PRESSURE ON ISRAEL INTERNATIONALLY BY CALLING FOR SUSPENSION OF ISRAEL

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FROM THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY. EXPRESSING PARTICULAR UNHAPPINESS OVER RABIN'S STATEMENT "TWO DAYS AGO" RE GOLAN, KHADDAM ASKED IF USG HAD PROTESTED THIS STATEMENT, WHICH EFFECTIVELY STATED GOI DETERMINATION TO ANNEX GOLAN. IF WE HAD PROTESTED, HE HOPED TO BE INFORMED OF IT. HE ARGUED THAT TO DATE HE SAW EVIDENCE ONLY OF PRESSURE ON THE ARABS AND NONE ON ISRAEL. I SAID THIS WAS NONSENSE. HE HAD ONLY TO HAVE HIS STAFF SCAN ISRAELI DAILY PRESS OVER THE PAST SEVERAL WEEKS TO BRING HIM CLEAR EVIDENCE OF US POLITICAL EFFORTS TO MOVE ISRAEL. SAID HE SHOULD HAVE NO DOUBT ABOUT OUR VIEW OF THE DANGERS INHERENT IN ANY CAMPAIGN AIMED AT SUSPENSION OF ISRAEL

FROM THE UN. EMPHASIZED THAT SUCH CAMPAIGN ONCE STARTED COULD EASILY GET OUT OF CONTROL. KHADDAM SAID HE CONFIDENT THAT SYRIA WOULD MAINTAIN CONTROL OF ITS POLITICAL POSITION. REPLIED I NOT SUGGESTING SYRIA WOULD LOSE CONTROL OF ITS OWN POLICY BUT HOW COULD HE BE CONFIDENT OF CONTROLLING POLICIES OF OTHER STATES? KHADDAM DID NOT REPLY BUT COUNTERED IT UNREASONABLE FOR US TO ASK SYRIA TO REFRAIN FROM POLITICAL ACTIVITY EXPOSING ISRAELI POSITIONS, IF AT THE SAME TIME US CANNOT COMPELL ISRAEL TO CHANGE THESE POSITIONS.

4. KHADDAM SAID HIS INTENTION AT JIDDA WAS TO PREPARE THE INTERNATIONAL ATMOSPHERE FOR POSSIBLE FUTURE ACTION IN NEW YORK. HE WOULD BE DISCUSSING PROSPECT OF SUSPENDING ISRAEL WITH HIS FELLOW ARAB FONMINS. (COMMENT: IT MAY BE SIGNIFICANT HE DID NOT SAY "ISLAMIC" FONMINS.) NOTED THAT IF SYRIA DID NOT RAISE THIS QUESTION AND PURSUE IT AT JIDDA, NO ONE ELSE WOULD. AS FOR WHAT WOULD HAPPEN AFTERWARDS, THIS WOULD DEPEND ON DEVELOPMENTS IN THE REGION. THE LIMA CONFERENCE IS STILL SIX WEEKS AWAY AND THE UNGA DEBATE MORE THAN THREE MONTHS. BY EARLY AUGUST, SYRIA WOULD JUDGE WHETHER THERE WERE ANY POSITIVE RESULTS FROM DIPLOMATIC EXCHANGES PRESENTLY UNDERWAY. IF SYRIA DEEMED THESE RESULTS POSITIVE ITS POSITION WOULD BE POSITIVE. IF SYRIA DEEMED THE RESULTS NEGATIVE, IT WOULD TAKE A CORRESPONDINGLY NEGATIVE POSITION. HE ADDED, "BY POSITIVE I MEAN THAT WE MUST HAVE SOME-CONFIDENTIAL

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THING IN HAND WHICH WILL SHOW THERE WILL BE MOVEMENT ON ALL FRONTS, NOT JUST ONE. A SUCCESSFUL NEGOTIATION AFFECTING ONE FRONT ONLY DOES NOT CHANGE MATTER AT ALL AND IT WILL ONLY PROMPT US TO TAKE FURTHER ACTION TO ISOLATE ISRAEL."

5. ARAB PUBLIC OPINION: KHADDAM TWICE CITED PROBLEMS THAT SYRIAN LEADERSHIP HAD VIS-A-VIS SYRIAN PUBLIC OPINION. NATIONAL SENTIMENT AND ASPIRATIONS OF SYRIANS WERE OUTRAGED BY ISRAELI STATEMENTS ON GOLAN AND THESE EMOTIONS COULD NOT BE IGNORED. SARG IS COMPELLED TO TAKE AT LEAST SOME POLITICAL ACTION. TO REMAIN SILENT WOULD WEAKEN TRUST WHICH SYRIAN PEOPLE HAVE IN ITS LEADERSHIP. TOLD HIM THAT MY OWN READING OF SYRIAN PUBLIC OPINION WAS THAT THEY HAD CONSIDERABLE TRUST IN THEIR LEADERSHIP AND FELT THAT THEIR INTERESTS WERE BEING WELL LOOKED AFTER. I ASSUMED THAT EVEN IF SYRIA REMAINED SILENT AT THIS POINT ITS CREDENTIALS FOR MILITANCY WERE WELL ESTABLISHED AND IT NEED HAVE NO REAL FEAR ABOUT ITS POPULAR SUPPORT. KHADDAM QUICKLY REPLIED THERE WAS NO DOUBT SARG WAS A POPULAR REGIME BUT IT WOULD NOT HAVE

SURVIVED THIS LONG WITHOUT BEING SENSITIVE TO THE
ISSUE OF PUBLIC CONFIDENCE. TO STAY SILENT IN THE FACE
OF RECENT ISRAELI STATEMENTS ABOUT GOLAN
AND THE PALESTINAINS POSED TOO GREAT A TEST OF PUBLIC
CONFIDENCE IN THE REGIME.

6. REPLIED I COULD APPRECIATE THERE WERE PRESSURES ON
ARAB LEADERSHIPS AND NATURALLY CREDITED HIS INTER-
PRETATION OF SYRIAN PUBLIC OPINION. AT SAME TIME HE
SHOULD GIVE US CREDIT FOR UNDERSTANDING WESTERN
PUBLIC OPINION, AND IN PARTICULAR AMERICAN, BETTER
THAN HE. AMERICAN PEOPLE WOULD NOT UNDERSTAND
CAMPAIGN TO EXPELL ISRAEL. THEIR REACTION COULD SERVE TO WEAKEN THE
UN, PERHAPS BEYOND REPAIR. NOTED INCREASING
DIFFICULTY ANY SUCH MOVE WOULD POSE TO OUR GOAL
OF PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT AND THAT AREA COULD
MORE LIKELY SLIP TOWARDS WAR.

7. KHADDAM MAINTAINED POSITION THAT SYRIAN INITIATIVE
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WOULD NOT UNDERMINE US POLITICAL EFFORTS TO ADVANCE
POLITICAL SETTLEMENT. AS FOR EFFECT
ON UN, HE ARGUED, UN BECOMES WEAK WHEN ITS RESOLU-
TIONS ARE NOT IMPLEMENTED AND ITS CHARTER BECOMES
A TARGET OF DISRESPECT. COMPLAINED THAT ARABS ALWAYS
SEEMED TO BE TARGET OF DIPLOMATIC PRESSURE WHEN IT
WAS ISRAEL THAT WAS OCCUPYING ARAB LANDS. SYRIAN
AND ARAB STATES GENERALLY SIMPLY COULD NOT REMAIN
SILENT WHEN WORLD AS WHOLE WAS ONLY OPENLY UNWILLING TO
CONDEMN ISRAEL DECLARATIONS ANNEXING ARAB LAND. I
REPLIED THAT LAUNCHING OF CAMPAIGN AT JIDDA
COULD RESULT IN DIRECTION COMPLETELY
OPPOSITE TO WHAT SYRIA AND US WANT TO
ACHIEVE IN MIDDLE EAST. NOTED SECRETARY'S RECENT
SPEECHES IN VARIOUS US CITIES OUTSIDE OF WASHINGTON
EDUCATING US PUBLIC OPINION ON REALITIES OF
MIDDLE EAST. PROPOSED CAMPAIGN WOULD ONLY TEND UNDER-
MINE POSITION THAT PRESIDENT AND SECRETARY ENDEAVORING
TO ADVANCE. FURTHERMORE, CAMPAIGN TO OUST ISRAEL WILL
UNDERMINE THOSE AMERICANS, EUROPEANS AND EVEN ISRAELIS
WHO WERE ARGUING THAT A POLITICAL SETTLEMENT
WAS POSSIBLE AND THAT ARAB GOVERNMENTS WERE READY TO
ACCEPT ISRAEL. AT THIS KHADDAM FELL BACK SLIGHTLY
AND SAID "IN ANY CASE THERE ARE THREE AND ONE-HALF
MONTHS TO GO BEFORE THE GA DEBATE. DURING THAT TIME
THE US REASSESSMENT WILL SURELY HAVE PRODUCED SOME
SPECIFIC CONCLUSIONS. IN LIGHT OF THOSE RESULTS WE
CAN REASSESS OUR OWN INITIATIVE."

8. KHADDAM THEN RECALLED HIS COMMENTS IN WASHINGTON
THAT A SEPARATE STEP ON SINAI WOULD CAUSE AN "UN-

PLEASANT AND UNSATISFACTORY REACTION IN SYRIA." THAT WAS WHY HE HAD STRESSED MOVEMENT MUST OCCUR ON ALL FRONTS AND NOT JUST ONE. I SAID MY READING WAS THAT HE HAD RECEIVED THE MOST SOLEMN COMMITMENT THAT WE WOULD MOVE FOR CONSIDERATION OF GOLAN SHOULD A FURTHER INTERIM SETTLEMENT PROVE POSSIBLE ON SINAI. AGAIN NOTED STRESS IN ISRAELI PRESS OF GOI'S NEED FOR COMMITMENT FROM USG THAT IT WOULD NOT EXERT PRESSURE FOR ANY ARRANGEMENT EFFECTING GOLAN IF SINAI SUCCESSFUL. FROM THIS ISRAELI STRESS ALONE HE COULD DEDUCE DIRECTION US POLICY. KHADDAM CONFIDENTIAL

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THEN INQUIRED IF THERE ANY NEW INFORMATION RE SINAI SETTLEMENT. I SAID I HAD NOTHING DEFINITE IN HAND.

9. I THEN ASKED HIM TO SUM UP FOR ME SYRIA'S INTENTIONS IN JIDDA SO I MIGHT REPORT IMMEDIATELY TO THE SECRETARY. KHADDAM REPLIED:

A. HE WOULD DISCUSS THE QUESTION OF SUSPENDING ISRAEL FROM THE UN AT THE JIDDA CONFERENCE.

B. SYRIA RECOGNIZED IT COULD NOT BY ITSELF DICTATE SUCH A POLICY.

C. SYRIA WILL PRESENT A DRAFT RESOLUTION ON THE ME SITUATION ASKING THAT SANCTIONS BE IMPOSED ON ISRAEL. (HE SPECIFIED THAT "SANCTIONS" MEANT SUSPENSION OF ISRAEL UNTIL IT AGREED TO IMPLEMENT UN RESOLUTIONS.) KHADDAM CONCLUDED THAT SARG WILL WAIT WITH INTEREST TO HEAR WHAT SECRETARY WILL HAVE TO SAY AT THEIR NEXT MEETING.

10. COMMENT: FACT KHADDAM NOTED HE AWARE OF OUR PARALLEL DEMARCHES IN OTHER ARAB CAPITALS INDICATES THAT HE APPRECIATED JUST HOW SERIOUSLY WE REGARD CAMPAIGN TO SUSPEND ISRAEL. DESPITE THE BLUNTNESS OF HIS WORDS AND THE GENERALLY UNYIELDING POSITION HE ENUNCIATED, KHADDAM LISTENED CAREFULLY TO OUR ARGUMENTS. HE WAS PERSONALLY FRIENDLY AND GENUINELY WARM IN HIS PRAISE OF PRESIDENT'S AND SECRETARY'S PEACE MAKING EFFORTS. HE MAY ACTUALLY BELIEVE THA SUSPENSION CAMPAIGN CAN ONLY HELP THOSE EFFORTS. HOWEVER, I SEE IN HIS REFERENCES TO THE LAPSE OF TIME BETWEEN NOW, HIS NEXT MEETING WITH THE SECRETARY AND THE UNGA GENERAL DEBATE A STRONG HINT THAT HE VIEWS USING THREAT OF ISRAELI SUSPENSION AS A DEVICE TO KEEP US ON OUR TOES AND THE ISRAELIS OFF BALANCE.

11. HE PLAYED HIS ROLE TO THE HILT OF THE TOUGH SYRIAN, THE ONLY CONSISTENT DEFENDER OF ARAB RIGHTS. MIXED IN WITH RHETORIC, HOWEVER, WAS A GENUINE

SENSE OF OUTRAGE AT ISRAELI INTENTIONS VIS-A-VIS
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GOLAN AND RENEWED CONCERN THAT STEP-BY-STEP DIPLOMACY
IS BASICALLY INIMICAL TO SYRIAN INTERESTS.

12. KHADDAM SAID HE WILL DEPART FOR JIDDA EARLY
MORNING JULY 20.
MURPHY UNQTE INGERSOLL

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